

EDMODO SOCIAL NETWORKING CASE STUDY:  
REDEFINING SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS IN A DIGITAL WORLD

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## **Chapter 1:**

### **Introduction**

#### **Statement of Problem**

Traditionally, U.S. schools have practiced a top-down management approach to public relations using traditional press agency and information to communicate with students, parents, and community. In the past, school administrators developed strategies, tactics and communications for internal and external stakeholders, and the media. Education Philosopher John Dewey (1926) found even though teachers play a role in public relations, school organizations don't always recognize teachers perform public relations and focus public relations efforts on parents and taxpayers more than teachers and students. The problem is, the power of teachers is underestimated in public relations but important, since teachers are the backbone of schools and affect stakeholders' impressions (Dewey, 1926). Educational Theorist Christopher Calvin (2001) found the issue of underestimating teacher impact important to school public relations because teachers inevitably play a vital part in formulating the school's image, reputation, and success.

The change of times has caused some teachers to turn to Internet technology tools such as social media to connect with students. Media scrutiny, increased competition from private and charter schools, and changing student demographics have shifted school public relations from communications intended to promote and gain support to communications intended to form

partnerships based on public needs and value according to the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), a professional public relations organization (NSPRA, 2013). To date, over 200,000 teachers have used the educational social media website Edmodo to communicate and build relationships with students and parents (Edmodo, 2014). To this end, this study explored how teachers are using social networking technology to influence their public and explore if their communications are what public relations considers strategic; planned communications created for a targeted audience with a purpose, goal, objective and result in mind. Doing so helped us understand if a teacher's decision to use social networking affects the role of a teacher in public relations.

## **Background**

Advances in communication have not diminished the desire for school organizations to send and receive messages with their public. From text to instant messages and live video chats, rapidly moving technology and software tools have affected the way people communicate one-way, two-way, and mass communication messages. Advanced technology, Internet access and social media networking are behind the creation of virtual communities that afford students and parents direct access to teachers and real-time interactions. The new media has changed personal relationships and interpersonal communications because people can build relationships and exchange ideas online anytime, anywhere according to Communications Professor and Author Judy Baym (2010). Public Relations Theorist James E. Grunig (2006) questioned the impact of technology on cultivating relationships in the practice of public relations when he started to see social media websites move public relations from information management toward strategic communications.



Grunig's (2006) definition of strategic communications focused on the planned information, listening and feedback intended to cultivate relationships. We know the benefits of social media networking carry over into other fields such as education. For example, the research of M. Mirabolghasemi and S. Huspi (2012) supported the academic benefits of educational social networking websites for learning, but we don't fully understand how teacher-student communications affect the practice of school public relations. Grunig (2006) argued technology would cause a shift in public relations to strategic communications. Grunig's Four-Model Theory (1984) and Excellence Theory (1992), applied to this case study, but this study is based on Grunig's (2006) latest theory, Global Public Relations, because it postulates technology changes public relations from message dumping to strategic communications.

First created in the 1960s, the Excellence Theory (1992) expanded beyond the flow-of-information Four-Model Communication Theory (1984) to explain the value of public relations to organizations. Both theories have evolved into the Global Public Relations Theory (2006) which said public relations doesn't have to proceed from the top down and can affect a number of employees who communicate within the organization's public. The goal of this exploratory case study was to better understand how teachers are using communications on Edmodo to build relationships with students and explore if new technology changes the way schools should manage public relations.

### **Study Purpose**

The decision to use Edmodo to communicate and build relationships is significant because it could create stakeholder interest and engagement that may have impact beyond the classroom, such as teaching fundamentals of a process to the way people communicate with stakeholders. According to Grunig (2006), stakeholders is a broad term "Of people who might be

affected by management decisions or who might affect those decisions-such as employees or community residents” (p.12). Identifying and or targeting stakeholders, or publics, is important in public relations because organizational relationship management, reputation management and brand with perception management (Grunig, 2006). Public Relations Professor and Author Patricia Swann (2010) recognized the importance of stakeholders to public relations and defined the public relations process as strategic relationships intended “To solve problems and take advantage of opportunities, whether the client is an individual, a small organization, or a large entity” (p.6). Swann (2010) liked to refer to public relations as *public relationships* that serve the organization with purpose and provide value.

Teachers serve the school organization with purpose and provide value but aren’t usually thought of as public relations. This research examined teachers that communicate on Edmodo to see if they view the Edmodo as a public relations tool. Key important issues examined in this study include whether teachers’ use strategic communications on Edmodo and student communications management to see if it’s similar to public relations using Jerry A. Hendrix’s (1992) R.O.P.E. Theory. The four-step process known as R.O.P.E. is an acronym for research, objectives, programming and evaluation. R.O.P.E. is a best practice model used by public relations professionals that measure effective strategic communications for success and return on investment (Swann, p.7). Public Relations Consultant, Teacher, and Author Ronald Smith (2009) specializes in strategic planning with three strategic public relations planning goals of (1) task management, (2) relationship management, (3) reputation management. According to Smith (2009), there are also four main public relations objectives: (1) result objectives, (2) informational objectives, (3) attitudinal objectives that were also used in this study to help compare the teacher’s approach to strategic communications in public relations. Findings from

this study would be beneficial to the field of public relations, education, technology, business and government hoping to better understand social networking and potential affects of strategic communications on public relations management.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Strategic Communications in Public Relations**

There's been a shift in public relations over the years from press agency and the spread of information to planned-strategic communications according to Public Relations Scholar and Communications Consultant Don Stacks (2011). The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) updated their definition in 2012 to "Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics" (PRSA, 2013). The evolving definition is used in public relations management but isn't universally accepted by traditional theorists. Controversial differences of opinion, acceptance issues and or lack of knowledge may be to blame, but the truth is, it's unknown what percentage of organizations are following the modernized definition of public relations.

School organizations may still follow the 1982 definition of public relations with focus on "Planned and systemic management function" (NSPRA, 2013). The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) has worked with school organizations and educators since 1935 and currently uses the old Public Relations Society of America's (PRSA) definition, "Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other" (PRSA, 2013). To learn more about the role of education and social media networking, NSPRA has created a best practice blog that has explored ways teachers use technology to meet organizational communication goals.

The practice of public relations, often referred to as *PR*, has only been around for the past hundred years and is still considered a young field according to Seitel (2011). Admittedly, there are several different definitions of public relations, but all deal with stakeholders and publics. Seitel (2011) defined public relations as a two-way communication process that used specific result-based goals on targeted publics. Smith's (2009) strategic writing, planning and training referred to public relations as a management function of an organization working to enhance relationships and goodwill with its public. Strategic communications is a contemporary approach to public relations and like public relations has varying differences in definitions. Strategic communication is either informational or persuasive and is different from communication because the word *strategic* refers to a process with "A purpose and plan, in which alternatives are considered and decisions are justified" (Smith, 2009, p.4).

Smith (2009) believed, "Public relations is the most common embodiment of strategic communication" (p.4). The goal of strategic communications is to "Build understanding and support for ideas, and causes, services and products" according to Smith (p.4). There are elements of strategic communications just about everywhere according to Smith (2009) who found a number of fields, such as marketing, overlap public relations and sometimes use strategic communications with similar skills and approaches. Even the U.S. government has used strategic communications research to explore problems or issues, objective setting, planned communications, and execution (U.S. Department of Defense for Public Affairs, 2008). In 2008, the U.S. government released strategic communications as the fundamental function of their public relations.

Grunig (2009) conceptualized technology as a driving force behind the way people communicate and practice public relations. Grunig and T. Hunt (1984) theorized public relations

was much more than a message or campaign and defined PR as “The management of communication between an organization and its publics” in the Four-Model Communications Theory (p.7.). Twenty-five years later, Grunig (2009) advised organizations to use online conversations to expand reach to stakeholders. Even so, Grunig (2009) found some public relations practitioners’ resisted change and failed to adapt to social networking. Instead of being strategic with an action-planned message for a targeted stakeholder, practitioners dumped information into the general population. The Institute of Public Relations (IPR), known for science and measurements of public relations, recognizes changes and has created a *Social Science of Social Media Research Center* to understand social media implications on future public relations management (IPR, 2014).

Stakeholders are equally as important as strategic communications in public relations. Seitel (2011) is a long-term supporter of stakeholders at all levels of an organization and has said everyone plays a role in public relations if in contact with the organization’s public. The viewpoint is controversial among some scholars and industry leaders because it’s vastly different from the traditional top-down approach used in public relations management. Stakeholders are important to the success of an organization’s mission and goals and should be clearly identified according to Swann (2010). However, Swann (2010) realized organizations don’t always get to pick their stakeholders and found the public becomes a stakeholder when they become interested in the organization. Seitel (2011) found the rise of social media, the Internet, and an increase in public awareness and media influence, has caused rapid changes to an organization’s stakeholders.

Dewey (1927) first theorized that an organization’s internal public shouldn’t be overlooked and referred to a public as any group or individual that could be affected by

something good or bad. “Publics may be helpful or annoying, friendly or not, but an organization must deal with them regardless” (Smith, 2005, p.42). Teachers have always played a role in public support and should be ready to make a favorable impression especially during unforeseen and unfavorable situations according to Jon Nebor (1984), school superintendent and author. Nebor (1984) found the school’s morale and financial success is dependent on the teachers’ ability to maintain public support. Calvin’s (2001) research found teachers understand their influence and know they’re stakeholders critical to the organization’s mission, positive school perception, and successful school public relations. Despite teacher beliefs, the majority of teachers confessed that neither their college preparation nor their school system included public relations training (Calvin, 2001).

### **New Global Public Relations Theory**

In public relations, using strategic communications management for social media has helped empower publics and improve the value of public relations to organizations and stakeholders. Grunig (2006) first theorized change in the practice of public relations after noticeable communication changes seen with technology, social media, and signs people were sending and receiving messages differently on social networking websites. At first, public relations practitioners felt powerless and weren’t sure how to managed social media because they were accustomed to controlling publics with mostly one-way informational propaganda messages, according to Grunig (2006). The power wasn’t lost, but rather shifted, insisted Grunig (2006), who found social networking moved more people into the public with increased access and faster flow of information. Government and businesses also recognized the opportunity and began to experiment on ways to better reach their public using planned-strategic messages on social media. To support his theory, Grunig (2006) studied Brandy King (2009) of Southwest

Airlines to show how the organization solved real-time flight delay problems in 2009 using Twitter to interact with stakeholders and looked at Rebecca Harris (2009) of General Motors because the automaker created a blog to combat bad bankruptcy publicity the same year. Both examples were discussed at the 2009 Summit on Measurement of the U.S. Institute of Public Relations to better understand how corporations use new technology to reach publics with real-time open dialogues.

Modern-day online communications between high school teachers and students still follow Grunig and Hunt's (1984) basic Four-Model Communication Theory and Grunig's Excellence Theory (1992) of dominant informal coalition. The Four-Model Communication Theory (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) used four key concepts that helped better define types of messages using press agency, public information, two-way asymmetric, and two-way symmetric communications. Grunig's Four-Model Theory (1984) evolved into the Excellence Theory (1992) and used communication systems, relationship management, and information to benefit organizations and stakeholders involved in the public relations process. Grunig's Excellence Theory (1992) incorporated the Four-Model Theory (1984) and several other theories to explain the value of public relations to organizations using basic principles of relationship building and some strategic communications management.

Grunig's (2006) Global Public Relations Theory closely followed his Excellence Theory (1992) but branched out from value-based relationship building to strategic communications with goals, objectives, results, and evaluation. The latest theory, Global Public Relations (2006), is based on traditional grounded theories that ideally reduce message-dumping and increase involvement in the public relations process using technology and two-way interactions. Grunig's (2009) research theorized strategic communications could "Re-institutionalize public relations as



a behavioral, strategic management paradigm rather than as a symbolic, interpretive paradigm” (p.1). Grunig (2009) uncovered the power of social media in public relations and studied how technology eliminated barriers between organizations and publics with a ripple affect on the practice of public relations.

Grunig’s (2006) research found the social media revolution and demand for social networking groups was responsible for the change in the way people interacted as individuals and groups. Understandably, Internet, social media, and real-time messaging via technology generated new forms of personal connection that aren’t yet fully understood. Baym (2010) felt it was natural for people to be concerned about rapid innovation and relationship implications finding, “Technologies affect how we see the world, our communities, our relationships, and our selves” and raised questions on the effects of intimacy and connection” (p.2). Suzanne Wilson & Penelope Peterson’s (2009) research found that the rapid dissemination of technology has inspired teachers to think differently about traditional teaching theories in new ways grounded in learning styles, behaviorism, constructivism, social constructivism, and multiple intelligences. Grunig’s New Global Theory (2006) is normative and is reflective of contemporary theory exploring new ways of thinking. Social media technology and the Internet together are sometimes referred to as *new media* and used to describe evolving strategic communications.

The popularity, power, and effects of social media in schools was foretold by Laura Carlsmith and Jennifer Railsback in 2001 with the prediction technology would change the management of school public relations because of changes seen in the way schools send and receive messages. David Phillips & Philip Young (2009), public relations experts and authors, found the demand for Internet-mediated social media is changing public relations with online dialogue and interpersonal relationships. Wilson & Peterson (2009) found evidence to support a

shift from teacher–student message-dumping to active engagement in schools. The creation of social networking groups on social media has proved to be mutually beneficial to organizations and their publics because of the ability to connect and communicate with people online (Yang & Lim, 2009). However, kids have technologically advanced further than their schoolteachers in most cases, according to Educational Author Marc Prensky (2001). One of the biggest problems with educational social networking is the discontinuity between generations with “Instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age),” and who “Are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language” (Prensky, 2001, p.2). Susan Carroll & David Carroll (2011) found educators must learn to respond to public comments and criticism on an ongoing basis.

When it comes to communication, teachers have played an important role in public relations because community perception has directly affected student morale and school support (Nebor, 1984). Unbeknownst to some teachers, they acted as public relations agents for schools when they strategically used communication and technology to build relationships, engage stakeholders, improve communication, and promote school activities. Today, teachers are seldom recognized as public relations agents, and it has long been debated whether there’s a need for public relations with students, since the school’s main goal is to educate. While most scholars associate school administration with public relations duties, Arthur Moehlman and James Van Zwoll (1957) theorized that the student’s relationship to the school is a form of public relations because the student’s perception directly affects public opinion and the opinion of others (p.355).

### **Social Media and Edmodo Social Networking**

Classroom social networking effects on teacher communication have been established and are significant because of known potential implications on social networks. American

Sociologist and Professor Mark Granovetter's (1973) Strength of Weak Ties Theory demonstrated how information influences a social network because "Personal experience of individuals is closely bound up with larger-scale aspects of social structure, well beyond the purview or control of particular individuals" (p.1377). A gathering of small groups to form a community network best illustrates Granovetter's (1973) view of social networking. While social networking isn't a new concept, it's more widely practiced on social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace today.

The growing popularity of social networks like Edmodo has spawned virtual communities that build relationships and provide educational benefits (Mirabolghasemi & Huspi, 2012). Edmodo is an online educational social media networking service like Facebook and allows teachers and students to connect daily and for virtual communities with Internet forums, social blogs, email, Twitter, instant messages, and video chats for teachers, students, and parents on a closed, secure website. Based in San Mateo, California, Edmodo was founded in 2008 by technologists Nicolas Borg and Jeff O'Hara as a tool for teachers to connect with a virtual community (Edmodo, 2014). Virtual communities may be a new concept for some, but they've been around for some time. Rheingold (1993) studied virtual communities over twenty years ago and found they bring people together to share knowledge and emotional support using everything from gossip, pleasantries and debate.

According to Edmodo's website, Edmodo has serviced more than thirty-five million people, a social learning platform that's exciting and relevant to today's kids (Edmodo, 2014).

The teachers are using Edmodo to connect, collaborate, and communicate with students (Edmodo, 2014). However, not every school has supported the decision to interact online because of ethical and legal concerns, fearing inappropriate relations. Some schools have banned

teachers and students from using social media websites to communicate. The NSPRA (2014) is slowly adapting to social media and has started to explore social networking affects with blogs. School districts use a communications professional to help manage communications strategies that are proactive and use the four-step measurement process known as Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. Theory to help evaluate the effectiveness of public relations: (1) researching an issue or problem, (2) objectives (3) programming communications and (4) evaluation. In order to understand if teachers use the R.O.P.E. process in a way that is similar to the practice of public relations, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

**Research Question/Hypothesis: Edmodo Effects on School Public Relations**

**RQ1:** *Do teachers use strategic communications?*

**RQ2:** *How does the teacher's approach to student communications on Edmodo compare to the practice of public of relations?*

**RQ3:** *How do teacher communications on Edmodo affect the teacher's role in public relations?*

### **Chapter 3:**

#### **Methodology**

This exploratory case study examines the ways teachers communicate on Edmodo to understand if they plan, deliver, and evaluate strategic communications that build mutually beneficial relationships. To understand the relationship between teachers and their Edmodo communications, the researcher selected qualitative survey research. Information was collected and analyzed using a process-case study methodology to see if a teacher's approach to communications was similar to a public relations practitioner. Public Relations Management Authors Allen H. Center and Patrick Jackson (1995) established that a process-oriented case study can be any of the following: "An individual, a campaign, an entity, or whatever is of interest" and that such a study is designed to "Examine strategic decisions made based on changes in the case's timeline" (Stacks, 2011, p. 160). This study used the four-step R.O.P.E. (research, objectives, programming, and evaluation) public relations framework developed by J.A. Hendrix (1992) to analyze communications that include the following:

- Fact-finding and analysis of problem or opportunity
- Strategic plan of approach to deal with problem or opportunity
- Program of action, including communications
- Assessment of feedback and next steps (Stacks, p. 162)

The Edmodo Case Study group was created on Edmodo's website (Edmodo, 2014) to help fact-find, communicate, and recruit U.S. teachers to participate. Teacher insight, attitude, opinions, and communication workflow were used to help tell a story of how teachers use

strategic communications with their students. We also used Survey Monkey to help collect surveys that explored the teacher's approach to strategic communications. Survey questions were created based off Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. process to help provide insight on setting objectives that are results-based, informational, attitudinal, and or behavioral.

The Edmodo study also aimed to explore communication output and outcomes using teacher goals, as well as actual planned communications, results and evaluation methods. Findings helped show whether the teacher's communication management style is similar to Smith's (2009) public relations goals of (1) task management (pursuing an assignment or job), (2) relationship management (creating a bond or connection), and/or (3) reputation management (influencing image and perception). We analyzed open-ended teacher responses to examine the teacher's approach to communication objectives and compare to Smith's (2009) four main public relations objectives—(1) result objectives, (2) informational objectives (3) attitudinal objectives, and (4) behavioral objectives—to help determine the teachers' communication intent.

### **Data Collection**

We collected teacher communication data from four teachers over one month from February 2014 to March 2014. The one-month study included a communication workflow, calendar diary, teacher communications, personal email letters, communication trackers, surveys, and interviews. The teacher data helped us gain teacher insight on why they use Edmodo social networking, gain a better understanding of how teachers Edmodo to build relationships and communicate with students, identify the types of messages teachers are sending to students, and compare their teacher communication approach to the practice of public relations. All four teachers completed six surveys and were asked to participate in a phone interview and contribute

a teacher opinion letter (or email) and/or a communication tracker (a calendar or teacher-created document that tracks their daily communications).

### **Population and Study Sample: K–12 School Teachers**

We used convenience sampling methods to target U.S. teachers on Edmodo who use the website to communicate with students. The Edmodo study required data collection of information from four K–12 teachers from the Northeast, Midwest, Southeast. The four teacher participant demographics include one public school and three private religious schools. The teachers were asked to sign informed consent and media forms. Age and gender data helped us gain unique perspective on the potential relationships between technology, gender attitude, and whether or not age may affect opinions toward technology and or utilization. Convenience data provided a broader understanding on the subject, as well as background information using Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. public relations model and Center and Jackson's (1995) process-case study to help tell a story about potential affects of modern day technology and teacher strategic communications. Stacks (2011) established research methodology with Center and Jackson's approach as a valid public relations measurement tool that allows us to revise their strategy after feedback. We followed the four-step public relations Hendrix (1992) process and addressed research questions with (1) questions of definition, (2) questions of fact, (3) questions of value, and (4) questions of policy to gather data and define variables (Stacks, p.163-164). For this study, we created surveys, teacher opinion emails, letters, communication posts, diaries or trackers, and phone interviews helped document behaviors and attitudes toward public relations and school public relations.

### **Units of Analysis, Reliability, and Validity**

Edmodo is an established social networking website for teachers seeking to connect and build relationships with their students, yet little is known about Edmodo as a public relations tool when teachers use it for strategic communications (Edmodo, 2014). In fact, no known research has been conducted on Edmodo as a public relations tool or its effects on public relations. To help understand the situation, we created an Edmodo account to publicize and recruit participants for the study and posted an IRB approved recruitment letter several times to generate teacher interest. This study excluded teachers outside the U.S., which reduced the amount of interested participants. Thirty U.S. teachers joined the group, but only five teachers were willing to sign informed consent and participate in a case study. One of the five teachers with signed consent dropped out before the study began due to a work conflict.

We used Edmodo and SurveyMonkey websites to collect, process, and analyze data from February 2014 and March 2014. All four-teacher participants were female gender, between the ages of twenty-five and forty-seven. The mean age of the teacher participant was thirty-five. The youngest teacher, just out of college, teaches at a public school in the Northeast, while the other three more tenured teachers work at private religious schools. The youngest teacher in the case study group had recently earned her bachelor's degree; the eldest teacher held a master's degree, and the two other teachers were working to complete their master's degree by the end of 2014.

To help explore if teachers use strategic communications similar to the practice of public relations, we examined and analyzed data using Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. formula and Center and Jackson's (1995) evaluation next steps. Units of analysis were limited because of lack of participation, but included schedule conflicts, the necessity for signed consent and media permission forms, the request for communication diaries, and the lack of incentives for



participation. We have agreed to store the data collected for this study for three years at my house and will destroy it thereafter.

### **Data Analysis Strategies**

We used Edmodo to record an assortment of teacher communications, workflow diaries, and survey responses, then sorted and summarized findings. We analyzed teacher data for trends and or key words and compared the results with Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. public relations measurement. We first explored if teachers used strategic communications with open-ended surveys and rephrased some questions on different surveys for validity. The practice of public relations is known for using three public relations goals (task management, relationship management, and reputation management) and four objectives (results-based objectives, informational objectives, attitudinal objectives and behavioral objectives) in their attempts to win over publics.

We gathered data and compared what teachers do to the public relations field to see if there's a chance the teachers' approach is similar to public relations management. To learn more about the kinds of messages teachers are sending students, we used Grunig's Four-Model Communication Theory (1984) to explore Edmodo communications. How the participant feels about technology and its effects is a construct and may have affected outcomes. Table 1 provides insight into participant teacher demographics.

**Table 1:** *Teacher Participant Demographics and Data*

Teacher Identity Demographics	Surveys 1–4	Rating Surveys 5–6	Phone Interview and Final Survey 7	Teacher Letter/ Opinion Emails	Teacher Communi- cation Tracker or Diary	Teacher Messages on Edmodo
Teacher 1 Private Catholic School Grades K, 5, 6, 7, 8 Gender: Female Age: 40 Teaching Experience: 8 Years Working on a Master's Degree Using Edmodo for 7 Months	X	X			X	X
Teacher 2 Large Public School Grade 9 Math Teacher Gender: Female Age: 25 Teaching Experience: 7 Months Bachelor's Degree Using Edmodo for 7 Months	X	X	X		X	X
Teacher 3 Private Christian School Grades 6, 7, 8, 10 Technology Teacher Gender: Female Age: 47 Teaching Experience: 10 Years Master's Degree Using Edmodo for 7 Months	X	X	X	X		
Teacher 4 Private Catholic School Grade 12 Social Studies Teacher Gender: Female Age: 31 Teaching Experience: 8 Years Working on Master's Degree Using Edmodo for 3 Years	X	X	X	X		

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Case Study Findings**

The Edmodo Case Study used three research questions to explore how teachers are using Edmodo to influence their public. The small teacher study examined teacher opinions, attitudes and communications to explore the possibility social networking technology is changing the teacher's role in public relations. This case study sought to better understand if teachers, like public relations practitioners, plan their communications with daily, weekly, or monthly goals and objectives.

#### **RQ1: Do teachers use strategic communications?**

For this study, we used Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. formula to create a survey that automatically organized communication responses into four basic areas exploring whether the teacher communications included research, objective settings, planned communications, and evaluation measures. The purpose was to see if teachers sometimes manage communications similar to public relations. What the data showed is all of the teachers use strategic communications on Edmodo at least some of the time. We further defined strategic communications so teachers understood what we were interested the difference between planned communications with goals and objectives and regular communications with no intent. After one month's time, the study showed teachers average one to six strategic student messages on Edmodo each day, and that the majority of those messages were one-way informational or two-

way interactive messages using Grunig's (1984) Four-Model Communication Theory. We also looked at the teachers' approach to communications to see if it was similar to public relations when using the Hendrix (1992) R.O.P.E. four-step formula, a standardized and highly recognized measurement in the practice of public relations.

**RQ2: How does the teacher's approach to student communications on Edmodo compare to the practice of public of relations?**

We used Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. approach to explore if teachers researched issues or problems with objective setting, programmed communication plans and evaluation measures. We created questions to help examine strategic communications similarities between the teacher and a public relations practitioner using the R.O.P.E. concept as a guide. We also designed a survey to gauge whether or not the teachers approach to online student communications was the same as public relations. Findings show the majority of teachers sometimes use strategic communications in the following ways:

- Fact-find or research a problem, issue, or opportunity, then develop a plan of approach and deliver the message to students on Edmodo.
- Plan and set objectives for their communications.
- Help brand their school through Edmodo communications and believe their decision to use Edmodo helps improve their school's public relations with students, parents, and community.
- Monitor and analyze communication outcomes as a result of Edmodo, then assess feedback and next steps.

The survey responses demonstrate teachers may be moving toward strategic public relations and raise the question of whether it's possible Edmodo social networking is changing the direction of school public relations.

**Table 2:** *Teacher Approach to Communications: Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E Theory*

Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. Formula	Number of Teachers						
	strongly agree	somewhat agree	agree	undecided	somewhat disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
<p>Research: Fact-finding and/or analysis of problem or opportunity</p> <p>Q2: I sometimes fact-find or analyze a problem, situation or opportunity then develop a plan of approach and deliver the message to students on Edmodo.</p>	2	1		1			
<p>Objectives: Strategic plan of approach to deal with problem or opportunity</p> <p>Q1: I use Edmodo to strategically communicate with students.</p> <p>Q6: I set goals and objectives for at least some of the messages I send to students.</p>	4 4						
<p>Programming: Program of action, including communications</p> <p>Q3: In the past 6 months, my students have received proactive and or reactive messages to a problem or opportunity from me on Edmodo.</p> <p>Q4: I target specific groups on Edmodo such as students with planned communications.</p> <p>Q5: I normally plan and execute a theme, message, action or special event message to students on Edmodo.</p>	4 4 4						
<p>Evaluation: Assessment of feedback</p> <p>Q7: I've seen a change in behavior building relationships with students, parents and or community on Edmodo.</p> <p>Q8: I help brand my school through Edmodo communications and believe my decision to use Edmodo helps improve my school's public relations with students, parents and community.</p> <p>Q9: I monitor and analyze my communication outcomes as a result of Edmodo then assess feedback and next steps.</p> <p>Q10: Teacher-student communications on Edmodo change the role of a teacher in school public relations</p>	2 1 3 2	2	2 1 2	1			

**Teacher communication workflow.** Building a process-case study helped us explore teacher communication behaviors, attitudes, and workflow to see if their strategic communications are similar to Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. public relations approach with research, objectives, programming, and evaluation methodology. For this study, teachers contributed a communication workflow that included a teacher communication diary or opinion letters with types of communications to help tell their story. The information granted a better understanding of the sender's message and intent and showed teachers are planning at least some of their communications with a goal and objectives.

Teacher 1 provided us a teacher workflow, or daily communication activities that reflected her message activity. The teacher used the online Edmodo calendar to privately record her activities and opinions for the Edmodo Case Study. The teacher works for a private religious school and was fairly new to Edmodo at just over seven months experience when she signed up for the study. The teacher said she uses Edmodo to publish her classroom newsletter and sometimes share school initiatives and classroom goals and expectations. You can see an example of her planned communications in Table 3.

The teacher said the majority of her communications are task-management goal oriented, but shared she sometimes uses relationship and reputation management goals. A task reminder is essentially a to-do message on Edmodo that assigns a task to students such as homework deadline or upcoming event. Below, in Table 3, is an example of a teacher-communication workflow diary that demonstrates the teacher has planned-strategic communications for at least some of her interactions.

**Table 3:** *Edmodo Communication Workflow Examples:**Teacher Diary from Teacher 1*

Date	Edmodo Case Study: Teacher Diary
2/9/14	Every Sunday at 5 PM, the classes that I teach receive an agenda of week. The agenda details the lesson plan for each day. Also, my homeroom class receives an electronic newsletter. I teach Language Arts 5th–8th, Literature 5th and 6th, Religion 5th and 6th, and Math 6th grade. All these classes receive an agenda every Sunday. The purpose is to inform them of what is expected during the week, and other announcements that are pertinent to the class. I like my students and parents to be proactive and to take ownership of learning.
Week 2 Communication Examples	Agenda: Agenda for the week of Feb. 10–14, 2014 (No school on Feb. 14, Professional Development Day for teachers) Feb. 10, Monday1. Subjunctive Mood.  Task reminders: Please continue to revise your 7 best papers, if you are finished with them; please submit the 7 papers to me for further editing.  Task reminders: Please continue to answer your Socratic questions. I will be collecting Literature journals on Thursday, Feb. 6.  Task reminders: Submission of source cards and note cards that follow the Feb. 28, Friday.

**Teacher opinion letter.** Edmodo has the ability to help teachers and students connect on the same website through social networking. The Edmodo Case Study showed us teachers are finding new ways to reach their publics with private and mass communication messages on everything from video chat to instant messages. All four teachers did not use the website's calendar, but they all said they used their own version of a calendar to set objectives for their communications, develop action plans, and track results to determine next steps for their communications. The teachers used different communications to reach students on Edmodo, from instant mass messages to private messages, podcasts, video posts, and re-posts of current events or hot topics. As seen in Table 4, teacher 4 wrote a teacher opinion email to help explain ways she uses Edmodo in her classroom.

**Table 4:** *Edmodo Communication Workflow Examples:**Teacher Opinion Letter from Teacher 4*

Teacher Opinion Letter	Types of Edmodo Communications
<p><b>Teacher Opinion Letter</b>  <b>From:</b> Teacher 4  <b>Sent:</b> Wednesday, February 5, 2014 8:48 PM  <b>To:</b> Ross, Deborah  <b>Subject:</b> Edmodo Feedback</p> <p>Greetings, Ms. Ross~</p> <p>I'm an 8th year teacher at a small Catholic high school teaching social studies to seniors (mostly). I started using Edmodo about 3 years ago, and have become the unofficial guru for our school. I use it for courses, to collect assignments (which means less stacks for me to carry around to grade) and communicate to the students (post links to news stories, send reminders or changes in plans -- "Hey guys, the copier broke, so I am pushing the test to Tuesday." -- I have them set alerts to come as text messages, so I know they get those a.s.a.p.). I also sometimes have them respond to discussion prompts, and I have even done a real-time chat in a small group during events (I teach government, so I did that during the State of the Union).</p> <p>I have also used it for groups not associated with classes, like Student Government officers or clubs. Here I have used it for polls (take a vote on what color our shirts should be this year), scheduling and posting minutes from meetings, etc. Initially, there was a tiny pushback from some parents ("another website to use and password to remember?"), but for the most part, it has become a nice vernacular for those teachers who use it regularly. ("If you were absent, check Edmodo — I posted the handout from class and the video we watched in class.").</p> <p>As for the students, I think it helps to build some digital citizenship skills, in learning what not to post publicly, encouraging initiative in contacting teachers and finding ways to make it work. I think it does help to reinforce our image as a technology-focused school. That's a general overview, but I'm happy to answer any other questions you may have too. Hope this helps!</p>	<p>Courses  Collect assignments  Communicate with students  Post links  Post video links  Post news stories  Send general reminders  Homework/assignments  Homework/assignment alerts  Text message alerts  Discussion groups  Real-time chats  Polls  Scheduling  Posts  Digital citizenship skills  Teacher-networking with Teachers</p>



**Table 5:** *Edmodo Communication Workflow Examples:**Teacher Communication Tracker from Teacher 2*

Communication Tracker	11-Feb	12-Feb	13-Feb	14-Feb	16-Feb	18-Feb
Student A						
Student B	Upload	Upload	Assignment	Reminder	Reminder	
Student C	3 videos	Videos	Post			Schedule
Student D						Post
Student E						
Student F			Replied		Replied	
Student G						
Student H						

**Teacher communication tracker.** Table 5, above, demonstrates how teacher 2 tracked her communications to measure results and determine her next step. Measurements are used in the practice of public relations to help examine whether goals and objectives were planned and executed with success. Not all of the teacher participants tracked their communications with a detailed tracker, but they all stated that they are mindful of their communications and do evaluate results to determine next steps or actions.

All four teachers in this case study said their communications are strategic and defined them as being planned with a goal in mind. Survey questions and phone interviews helped better understand the *why* behind Edmodo use. Teacher participants were asked to provide their opinion on the ability to strategically communicate on Edmodo. The study identified access to free technology as one of the biggest reasons why teachers turn to Edmodo. Other reasons why teachers find themselves using the website to connect with students are featured in Table 6 and include real-time communication, a safe place to communicate, and a way for teachers to interact with students and parents outside of the classroom.

**Table 6:** *Survey 1 Q2: What do you think about the ability to strategically communicate with students using Edmodo?*

Participant	Quote	Tag
Teacher 1	Aside from being cost-effective because it is free, Edmodo provides real-time communication with students and parents.	Cost-effective Favorable access Timely
Teacher 2	It is a great tool to have available, since I am able to communicate with my students when they aren't in my classroom.	Favorable access
Teacher 3	I believe it is a great source for communication due to it being secure, safe, and controlled by the teacher. It allows open communication, one-on-one communication, and group communication, all monitored by the teacher.	Favorable access Multiple message platforms Safe and secure
Teacher 4	It allows clarification of content, communication of additional material, and a significant increase in accountability for missed work after absences and assignments outside of a textbook.	Favorable access Flexible

One teacher (teacher 4) indicated she uses Edmodo because it affords her the opportunity to access absent students who missed assignments. The teacher thought the website increased accountability for missed work because students could access their assignments online and communicate with the teacher outside the classroom.

We understand Edmodo was free and improved access to teachers, but we wanted to understand the teachers' intent. To gain an understanding of the decisions behind communications, teachers were first asked (in Survey 1): "Why do you use Edmodo?" The open-ended survey responses were analyzed and segmented into key themes using Smith's (2009) traditional public relations measurement goals of (1) task management, (2) relationship

management, and (3) reputation management to examine whether teachers have a goal in mind when they send a message to students online.

**Table 7:** *Survey 1 Q1: Why do you use Edmodo?*

Participant	Quote	Tag
Teacher 1	I use Edmodo because our school doesn't have a class website. I intended to use it as a modified flipped classroom, student publishing, and electronic newsletter for my homeroom class.	Relationship management Task management
Teacher 2	I use Edmodo to promote teacher–student connections. I also use Edmodo because it is a useful tool to aid my students in understanding of the material taught, classroom expectations, helpful reminders, and much more.	Relationship management Task management
Teacher 3	First, to assign/turn-in assignments digitally. Second, to teach my students online etiquette and security. Third, to network with other teachers to learn and share ideas and solve problems.	Relationship management Reputation management Task management
Teacher 4	It is a reasonably reliable tool for me to communicate directly with my students, also giving them a way to submit assignments electronically.	Relationship management Task management

All four teachers said they use the website mostly for relationship management, but further questioning revealed they mostly use the service for task management, with relationship management second. Reputation management isn't necessarily the teacher's goal, but is affected by decisions to use task and relationship management practices in the classroom. In Survey 1 Q4, all four teachers defined public relations with task management goals, but only one teacher identified with all three public relations goals of task, relationship, and reputation management.

The Edmodo study further examined task, relationship, and reputation management during the phone interview; two of the four teachers said their teacher communications on

Edmodo have improved their school's image and/or perception. Responses were again grouped into key themes, such as task management, relationship management, and reputation management. During the follow-up phone interview, teacher 4 shared her positive attitude toward Edmodo communications and predicted online learning will become the new standard in education. The teacher explained, "It means that the school day no longer ends when the last bell rings. I can continue to communicate with them (students), they can ask questions in real-time, and I can provide supplemental materials to update course materials."

The Edmodo Case Study reveals that teachers incorporate informational and results objectives when planning most of their strategic communications, similar to public relations. In an attempt to further explore whether teacher communications can be considered public relations, the researcher developed Survey 5, a rating survey designed to help determine whether a teacher participant's strategic communications management is similar to a public relations practitioner's approach. The teacher participants were not told Survey 5 questions were modeled after Jerry A. Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. (research, objectives, programming, and evaluation) formula and Center and Jackson's (1995) addition of feedback methodology.

Responses helped explore the Edmodo communication process to determine whether the teachers' approach is similar to public relations. The teachers say they do research a situation or problem, develop a plan, and deliver messages to students on Edmodo. Next, the survey examined teachers to see if they take a strategic approach to their communications by setting goals and objectives, by targeting specific individuals and groups for at least some of their planned communications, and by sending both proactive and reactive messages. The Edmodo study also explored whether teachers monitor and analyze communications and feedback,

witness any changes in student behaviors because of their community classroom, or see evidence they are helping to brand the school.

Teacher responses showed the teachers do plan their student communications, set objectives, program an action plan, and evaluate the results. Survey findings in Table 8, below, demonstrate that a teacher's approach to strategic communications on Edmodo is similar to public relations and supports measurements indicating that teachers may be using Edmodo as a legitimate public relations tool. According to the Edmodo study, three of the four teachers find a problem or situation in a way similar to Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. formula and develop a plan with communications for students to be delivered on Edmodo at least some of the time. Teacher participant 2 was first undecided on the use of strategic communications because she didn't understand the context during the online survey. However, when asked in the follow-up interview if she researches problems or situations, she said she searches the Internet for classroom materials, such as video web links, and develops a plan to communicate on Edmodo. The Edmodo Case Study found that all four teachers strongly agreed that they set communication goals and objectives for at least some of the messages they send to students. Additionally, all four teachers strongly agreed they target specific groups with planned communications that include both proactive and reactive messages and said that they monitor and analyze their communication outcomes, then assess next steps. All of the teachers said building relationships on Edmodo has created positive behavior changes in students, parents, and/or the community. Finally, three of the four teachers reported that their decision to use Edmodo for student communications has helped brand their school.

### **RQ3: How do teacher communications on Edmodo affect the teacher's role in school public relations?**

The Edmodo Case Study questioned the implications of teacher communications on Edmodo. This study found that all four teachers agreed that their online communications affect school public relations in a more positive way. One teacher (teacher 1 in Table 8, below) shared, “The teacher, I think, is the face of the school more than the principal.” She sees the teacher as the main messenger for the school, with mostly task management and reputation management goals.

**Table 8:** *Survey 1 Q4: How do you define public relations?*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Quote</b>	<b>Tag</b>
Teacher 1	The teacher I think is the face of the school more than the Principal. The teacher is the main messenger in the educational public relations setting.	Task management Reputation management
Teacher 2	The role of a teacher is to stimulate our students to understand the world around them.	Task management Relationship management
Teacher 3	The teacher is a direct conduit to the families of school information. They can utilize technology, newsletters, and word-of-mouth. They also are a potentially strong messenger in the community. But I feel that many do not embrace this opportunity.	Task management Relationship management Reputation management
Teacher 4	Regardless of advertising campaigns or effective branding, a genuine educational experience shared by a room of students will be the best inspiration for word of mouth, much like a positive customer service experience serves as positive PR for a retail store.	Task management Relationship management

The teachers in this case study described Edmodo as real-time communications and said allowing access to teachers even after school helps increase student and parent confidence. Teacher 3 said the website helps teachers “Build a bridge of confidence” that empowers students, schools, and stakeholders. She has seen the social networking platform give students “The freedom to be themselves and share on a level that is more open with [her] as a teacher.” Table 9,

below, describes what kind of effect teachers think their communications have had on school public relations.

**Table 9:** *Survey 2 Q4: Teacher Perception Viewpoint on Edmodo Effects on School Public Relations*

Participant	Quote	Tag
Teacher 1	I believe that Edmodo is a positive site that promotes school public relations, whether we realize it or not. Since it is a new tool, it is understandable that there will be some who are cautious and skeptic about its use.	Reputation management Task management
Teacher 2	It affects students by keeping them involved with my classroom and the community.	Relationship management
Teacher 3	I feel it allows the open communication between students and teacher thus building bridges of safety and confidence; allowing the students to be more open to share and ultimately learn!	Relationship management Reputation management
Teacher 4	I believe it has shifted the culture of what students perceive to be standard academic functioning, including online submission of work, student–student communication, and student-teacher interactions.	Reputation management Task management

My students are more relaxed (yet very respectful) in communicating with me. They like that I can be contacted real-time even after school hours. My students are more engaged in learning because they know the expectations ahead of time. They are more empowered with learning,

said teacher 1, who used Edmodo to reach students and parents. She was one of two teachers who used the website to interact with parents. Reasons for not using Edmodo to communicate with parents included lack of parental interest and/or cooperation. Edmodo is a new way to directly interact with students, according to teacher 1. She described Edmodo as a tool that helps her promote the school. Her survey responses demonstrate school branding, with school logos on her teacher communication posts to students.

All four teachers agreed that the decision to use Edmodo can change the teacher's role in school public relations, but have experienced little to no change at their schools—partly because three of the teachers were new to Edmodo. Even though the teachers agreed that online social media networking redefines their role in public relations, Survey 4 revealed that only half of the respondents are included in school public relations policies; only two of the teachers said their school administrators proactively discuss school public relations and teacher expectations with them. Survey 4 questioned teachers to see if their teacher communications on Edmodo are helping or hurting public relations at their school. The majority of teacher participants believe the website is helping their school public relations, and the one teacher in the minority believes it's too early to tell.

Additionally, the majority of teachers don't feel their school system recognizes that teachers play an important role in school public relations, and they would like to see schools include teachers in policy and training aimed at the school system's public relations goals and objectives. Teacher 3 is the only participant who said she had taken a class or training session on public relations, and she was also the only teacher surveyed whose responses reflected reputation communication goals in addition to task and relationship goals. She responded with an email when the researcher asked if her background included any public relations training; Table 10, below, includes a portion of her response.



**Table 10:** *Teacher Participant Email RE: Response to PR Training*

From: Teacher 3

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 11:34 AM

To: Ross, Deborah Jean

Subject: Re: NEW Edmodo Follow up Survey

Deborah,

I am well, thank you for asking. ... I just completed your next survey. Regarding training of for public relations, I have "learned as I went" and feel that I am well groomed in this area. But, it can be a bumpy and dangerous road of trial and error for teachers. A class would be great!

Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders,  
[REDACTED]

To help understand viewpoints on school public relation policies, the researcher asked:  
In the past, school public relations was managed by administrators from the top down.  
Today teachers use websites like Edmodo to directly communicate with the  
organization's public. In your opinion, are you helping or hurting school public relations  
when you interact with students?

Two of the teachers said teachers are helpful, and two teachers thought both helpful and hurtful,  
depending on the situation (as discussed in Table 11).

**Table 11:** *Survey 4 Q4: In the past school public relations was managed by administrators from the top down but today teachers use websites like Edmodo to directly communicate with the organization's public. In your opinion, are you helping or hurting school public relations when you interact with students? Please explain.*

Participant	Quote	Tag
Teacher 1	If used wisely, I think that Edmodo and similar sites are helping the school to promote itself to its stakeholders. Edmodo is safe (the students, teachers, parents are the only audience), real-time, and cost-effective (free).	Helpful Safe Real-time Cost-effective
Teacher 2	Edmodo is used in a professional manner then we are helping. Students are connected to their teachers outside the classroom building relationships and understanding.	Helpful Connecting each other Building relationships
Teacher 3	This is truly a subjective area. It depends upon how and what the teachers communicate. It can be positive and promote learning. It can also be inappropriate and tear down learning.	Helpful and hurtful Can promote learning and tear down learning
Teacher 4	I think it can definitely create a more approachable PR effort, but without a central driving vision to the message, it has the potential to become scattered and nebulous.	Helpful and hurtful Approachable Nebulous

Finally, the Edmodo Case Study uncovered that teachers mostly use the public information model (which distributes information one way) and the two-way symmetrical model (which is interactive and promotes mutual respect) from Grunig's (1984) Four-Model Theory. Only one of the four teachers said she uses all of Grunig's Four-Model communications and said she uses the press agency model (one-way persuasion) and two-way asymmetrical model (modern marketing that seeks views, but doesn't change views) for her communications most of the time. During the final interview, all three of the teacher participants said they see themselves using the two-way symmetrical model and informational model most of the time on Edmodo.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

#### **Discussion**

The Edmodo Case Study provides critical insight into how social media networking and strategic communications are affecting teachers and their role in public relations. However, the data has limitations because of the small sample size. Study recruitment efforts originally generated interest from over thirty teachers, but only produced four participants. The majority of committed teachers dropped out just before the start of this study. As there was no follow up discussion, the researcher can only guess at the reasons. The decision not to participate may have been caused by

schedule conflicts, signed consent forms and media permission forms (which can cause worry about voicing personal viewpoints without permission from an employer), and/or failure to find incentive for participation (none of the teachers were offered payment for participation).

The small study size has limitations but can provide exploratory questions for future studies in public relations. Findings provide a unique perspective on social networking effects on public relations management for schools and may be beneficial to the study of public relations theory, the integration of public relations with communication functions, the management of strategic communications, corporate reputation, and the role of public relations for organizations and employees.

The researcher found Edmodo's website to be a valuable source of information, but regretted using Edmodo to collect some of the communications data. The website's privacy and security measures, designed to protect minors, prevented the researcher from investigating and conducting a thorough analysis of some of the teacher communications. In some cases, the teacher would have needed to add the researcher to their Edmodo classroom website. The decision would have exposed minors and required approval from the Ball State University Institutional Review Board. Additional concerns included self-reported data, which can be biased and exaggerated, and which may have limited the study because the information likely can't be independently verified. To help overcome this issue, some questions were further defined in phone interviews to help validate prior responses.

Findings collected from this study should help us understand if teachers are using strategic communications, the types of messages they send and receive on Edmodo, and their decision to use Edmodo to explore if social networking to study affects on teachers and their role in public relations. We created a series of surveys based on Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. formula used to measure public relations efforts, and collected teacher communication opinion letters and emails to see if teachers researched a problem or issue, set objectives, planned communications, and evaluated efforts similar to public relations. The Edmodo study also used Smith's (2009) top three strategic public relations planning goals—(1) task management, (2) relationship management, (3) reputation management—and four main public relations objectives—(1) result objectives, (2) informational objectives, (3) attitudinal objectives—to help compare the teachers' approaches and intents to strategic communications in public relations.

The Edmodo study focused on strategic communications and found three of the teachers strongly believe they plan their communications with an action-oriented goal. The answer is

important because if teachers are using social networking to build relationships with strategic communications, their actions would further support Grunig's (2006) Global PR Theory that public relations is evolving into strategic communications. Grunig's Four-Model Theory (1984) was also used to examine what types of communications teachers are sending and send and receive, and Smith's (2009) four main public relations objectives: (1) result objectives, (2) informational objectives, (3) attitudinal objectives and behavioral-objectives. Smith's (2009) top three top public relations goals using task management, relationship management and reputation management were also used to help compare the teacher's approach to communications to public relations.

**Use Case: <<public relations application>>.** We know Edmodo helps build relationships, but we don't know how strategic communications on Edmodo affect teachers, students, schools and the general population. Four teachers joined the Edmodo Case Study and were able to complete the trial in one month. During the study, teachers were invited to contribute teacher opinion emails, communications, communication trackers, and/or diaries to help us understand how the teacher approach to communication management compares to the practice of public relations. Overall, the data supports the finding that teachers sometimes use strategic communications that can support Grunig's Global Public Relations Theory (2006) that organizations are moving away from top-down management into strategic communications management. Key findings that will help future researchers include:

- All four teachers said they view Edmodo as a public relations tool.
- All four teachers said they communicate with students on Edmodo with planned messages two to six times per day.
- Three of the four teachers said they also use Edmodo to communicate with parents.
- Three of the four teachers view teachers as the main messenger of school communications.

- All four teachers reported they use strategic communications on Edmodo (they plan some of their communications, set goals and objectives, target specific individuals and/or groups, and communicate and track results).
- The teachers' approach to communications appeared to be similar to Hendrix's (1992) four-step R.O.P.E. formula used in the practice of public relations.
- All four teachers said they set goals for their communications that mostly include task and relationship management, and sometimes reputation management.
- All four teachers agreed Edmodo changes the way teachers send and receive communications by including real-time interactions.
- All four teachers said Edmodo helps build relationships with students and parents.
- Three of the four teachers said they believe Edmodo has helped to improve their school's reputation.
- Three of the four teachers said they help brand their school through Edmodo communications.
- All four teachers agreed that their decision to use Edmodo has changed their role in school public relations.
- Two of the four teachers said their school recognizes teachers for their role in public relations and includes them in the organization's public relations.
- All four teachers agreed there's a need to include teachers in policy and training aimed at the school system's public relations goals and objectives.
- All four teachers agreed there's a need for public relations training for teachers.
- In the phone interview, all three teachers said their Edmodo communications can mostly be defined with Grunig's (1982) Public Information Model and Two-Way Symmetrical Model.
- All three teachers in the phone interview said the majority of their student messages have informational and results objectives.

### **Strategic teacher communications and Grunig's Global Public Relations Theory.**

Grunig's Global Theory (2006) predicted that new media would cause a paradigm shift in public relations toward both a symbolic, interpretive paradigm and the strategic management, behavioral paradigm. Grunig's (2006) theorized the Internet and social media provide stakeholders and or publics a voice. The Edmodo Case Study supports Grunig's (2006) theory because it shows teachers are using strategic communications management to provide students a

voice on Edmodo. Seitel (2013) found effective communications and the management of communication is what public relations is really about. Clear and effective student communications are crucial to success, “Just as an employee is one of the most critical ‘publics’ for a boss, so too, is a student for a teacher. Unless the teacher communicates clearly and effectively with that student, he or she will fail” (Seitel, personal email communication, September 15, 2013).

Teachers in the Edmodo Case Study strongly believe what they communicate, why, when, and how are extremely important to student success. Teachers feel they are using the website to strategically reach their public and find they’re becoming more strategic with their result-oriented communications. The teachers’ definition of strategic communications shows teachers target specific groups or individuals on Edmodo with strategic communications that are results-oriented, informational, and attitudinal- and/or behavioral-based, intended to influence action. Additionally, the Edmodo Study demonstrates teachers are using strategic communications management on Edmodo to help build mutually beneficial relationships for the school organization.

Strategic communications management is needed according to Grunig’s Global Public Relations Theory (2006) in order to build relationships because of the broader reach on social media. The teacher strategic communication findings support Grunig’s Global Public Relations Theory (2006) definition of strategic communications and demonstrate the teacher’s approach to strategic communications is similar to Hendrix’s (1992) R.O.P.E. Theory, a standardized communication effectiveness measurement used in the practice of public relations. The Edmodo study finds teachers appear to follow the R.O.P.E. Theory and research, set objectives, plan communications and evaluate their communications at least some of the time. This study also

shows the number of strategic communications, defined as planned communications with a goal in mind, ranged in this study from one or two messages each day to six messages per day.

However, more research on teacher communications is needed to further explore findings, since this study was based on only four teachers.

The Global Public Relations Theory is a contemporary theory based on Grunig's (2006) belief technology empowers middle-level management and the public because the social networking platform allows direct access. Direct access to teachers on Edmodo highlights the need for more research to help validate this study's findings and determine whether or not digital media is causing a shift in school public relations from the top down. "I believe it [Edmodo] has shifted the culture of what students perceive to be standard academic functioning, including online submission of work, student–student communication, and student–teacher interactions," said teacher 4 when asked about strategic communications on Edmodo. Teacher 1 thought "Edmodo and similar sites are helping the school to promote itself to its stakeholders. Edmodo is safe (the students, teachers, parents are the only audiences), real-time, and cost-effective (free)." These two teacher examples show how strategic communications and social media networking appear to be changing the way teachers approach their student communications.

The teachers in this study describe Edmodo as *direct* or *real-time* access to stakeholders which supports Grunig's (2006) belief social media is breaking down barriers and reducing the need for a top-down approach to communications. Findings show teachers have influence over stakeholders with strategic communications and affect behaviors and the organization's brand. The Edmodo study also shows strategic communications on Edmodo transforms the way schools send and receive communications—moving away from the top-down public relations approach.



The findings may be important to future educators and public relations leaders who may want to study new technology's effects on relationships and organizations.

The technology evolution has required communicators to think differently about the way they send and receive messages. The biggest change in education has been a shift "From absorption of information to active engagement with information" (Wilson & Peterson, 2009, p. 2). Grunig (2006) suggested the need for new thinking in his Global Public Relations Theory because of access and free flow of information created by the Internet and social media. The Edmodo study shows the platform provides flow of information both ways because teachers are using Edmodo to engage students with two-way interactive messages. Teacher opinions and survey responses in the Edmodo Case Study further support a need for new ways of interacting with technologically advanced students.

Using Edmodo for strategic teacher communications "Allows open communication, one-on-one communication, and group communication all monitored by the teacher" in a safe and secure environment, according to teacher 3. Often referred to as *outlets* in public relations, the ways in which teachers reached students on Edmodo varied widely: Teachers posted course syllabi, homework assignments, homework due dates and alerts, classroom events or schedules, school events or school schedules, teacher schedules, private messages, group communications, individual communications, live chats, student recognitions and/or rewards, surveys or polls, podcasts, relevant or helpful videos, and news articles. They also hosted flipped classrooms, in which students learn to improve their communications by allowing students to lead the class in a discussion and or lesson.

Research has shown technology effects in the public relations field, but public perception, school morale, support, and/or public image effects in school public relations are not

fully known. According to Seitel (2011), the Commission on Public Relations Education and the Public Relations Society of America conducted the last big study on public relations education in 1999. Grunig (2006) believes digital media content allows public relations researchers the ability to segment stakeholders and publics to help analyze concepts, situations, problems, ideologies, and values. While Grunig (2006) confessed he'd never done it, we used his idea and segmented several teacher responses into Smith's (2009) top three public relations goals of (1) task management, (2) relationship management, and (3) reputation management. The results show teachers primarily use Edmodo for task and relationship goals but occasionally target communications aimed at reputation or see reputation as a result of their strategic communications. Overall, the teachers use Edmodo because they believe it's the more effective way to connect and communicate with their students.

The teacher participants believe their decision to communicate strategic messages on Edmodo helps build relationships with their students, and all agreed they've seen some behavior changes as a result of their communications. Teacher 2 said, "I love using Edmodo, especially since it benefits the students who are reluctant to speak up or raise their hand in class. Edmodo allows them to ask their question or concern without putting them in the 'spotlight.'" The same teacher said that knowing that the teacher is available also helps build relationships because it creates awareness for students and their families interested in following the classroom. The types of messages uncovered in this study further support the theory that teacher communications are similar to those of a public relations practitioner.

The practice of public relations follows Grunig's Four-Model Communication Theory used to describe what type of messages people send and receive. When the teachers were asked to describe their student communications (persuasion and manipulation propaganda; techniques

to deliver information; modern marketing; or communications that negotiate with publics, resolve conflict, and promote mutual respect), the majority of teachers said they use the Public Information Model (with one-way communications created to distribute information) and the Two-Way Symmetrical Model (used to interact, resolve conflict, and promote mutual respect). During the phone interview, one teacher described her Edmodo communications an interactive two-way discussion that can be used to “build bridges,” helping resolve problems, negotiate, and/or promote mutual respect with her public. The One-Way Public Information Model and the Two-Way Interactive Model support Grunig’s Global Public Relations Theory (2006) that technology is moving public relations toward strategic communication management.

**Teacher public relations, social media networking, and brand.** The Edmodo Case Study demonstrates strategic communications is affecting the way organizations may want to define public relations. The definition of public relations has changed several times since the concept was first defined in the early twentieth century and has varying definitions today among scholars and within industry. Grunig (2011) found that the problem with public relations is that most people don’t view it as a management activity that builds relationships between stakeholders and organizations, but rather have institutionalized it as a messaging activity designed to increase sales or influence public perception in the media (p.12). Scholars and industry leaders reluctant to accept the strategic management approach in public relations typically favor the traditional persuasion or marketing approach to public relations grounded in critical and rhetorical theories (Grunig, 2011).

Understanding the importance of publics and the ability to effectively communicate is critical to successful public relations according to Seitel (2011) who believes the proper management of communication includes correctly identifying an organization’s public. Seitel

(2011) attributed the Internet and social media responsible for the public relations evolution since the fathers of public relations, Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays, began with traditional public relations in the early 1900s. “Cable, satellite, mobile phones, instant messaging, pagers, bar code scanners, voice mail systems, videodisk technologies, and a multitude of other developments revolutionized the information transmission and receiving process” creating new ways for public relations practitioners to reach their publics on Twitter, Facebook, and MySpace according to Seitel (2011, p. 36). Although the implications of social networking can be seen with public relations growth in education, most schools don’t include their organization with public relations initiatives.

The Edmodo Case Study shows teachers identify students as stakeholders or publics and approach student communications similar to Hendrix’s (1992) four-step R.O.P.E. Theory used in the practice of public relations. Teachers using social networking to strategically communicate should be considered public relations based on the PRSA’s (2013) website definition of public relations, “Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.” The findings show teachers are using Edmodo for strategic communications and are using online interactions to create mutually beneficial relationships between the students and the school organization. Moreover, all four-teacher participants believe they play a role in public relations and that the public perception of teachers can affect school morale, support, and image. According to Grunig (2006) and his forty years of research, public relations is really about building relationships with stakeholders.

Grunig’s research (2011) demonstrated his strategic paradigm theory provides publics with a voice that reflects the needs of an organization and its publics. Grunig’s (2006) does not exclude traditional public relations activities, such as media relations and the dissemination of

information, but “Rather broadens the number and types of communication activities and fits them into framework of environmental scanning, research, and listening” (p.19). Grunig (2006) found relationships and reputation are the results of strategic communications. The Edmodo study shows strategic teacher communications impact relationship and reputation outcomes and broaden the way teachers and students communicate. Using Edmodo to communicate shows that Edmodo provides a voice to schools, teachers, students—and, in some cases, parents—and gives them what teachers describe as real-time access to each other online.

It’s interesting that one of the teachers used the word *voice* to describe her Edmodo communications. Dawson (2014) defines brand voice as the brand’s presence in the social media marketplace, and its potential to develop massive followings based on social activity, content, and marketing (Dawson, 2014). Dawson (2014) finds interactions are being studied today to help better understand the brand voice and its value, purpose, reputation, and experience because tone can affect interest and following. Giving students and teachers a voice on Edmodo further supports Grunig’s Global Public Relations Theory (2006) because their two-way interactions make them part of the organizational decision-making process versus a conveyor of messages. Findings from the Edmodo Case Study highlight the need for more research on the brand voice affect on schools and stakeholders when teachers use the website. According to survey responses, some of the teachers felt their strategic communications on Edmodo do more than build relationships. Teacher 4 said she views Edmodo as a public relations tool that can help brand schools, adding, “Certain phenomena (titles of activities or events, profile pictures, or group mottos) could certainly contribute to the consistent perception of any school by the community at large.” Teacher 3 had a similar response and compares herself to a positive customer service experience that can create good publicity for the school, “Regardless of

advertising campaigns or effective branding, a genuine educational experience shared by a room of students will be the best inspiration for word of mouth.”

Now that we are in the twenty-first century and the Age of Information, a school district needs a communications professional to manage communication strategies that are proactive for a school district, instead of reactive, according to the NSPRA (2013). School districts must make a choice to be an active player in their community, not a passive one of the past, said Marsha Chappelow, Ph.D., of the NSPRA ([www.nspra.org](http://www.nspra.org)). The NSPRA opinion and Edmodo Case Study support the need for future public relations training for teachers so teachers understand their role in public relations, school policy, and school initiatives aimed at building relationships and reputation. All of the teachers are interested in learning more about effective school public relations. However, only two of the four teachers said their school recognizes their efforts and includes them in public relations initiatives.

The Edmodo study also supports Calvin’s (2001) research that shows a deficiency in public relations and technology training among teachers. The majority of teachers Calvin (2001) studied at two Texas school systems reported public relations training. “With the ever-broadening contact through the use of current technology and demanding school-community, it’s essential to incorporate public relations training into pre-service and in-service teacher preparation programs” (Calvin, p.1). Calvin’s (2001) research concluded that teachers need more training and tools to meet the developing demands of public relations. It’s important to note that some organizations in the private and public sector have avoided social media because of legal and ethical concerns.

The Internet and social media networking can strengthen relationships, but not without risk. Picazo-Vela, Gutierrez-Martinez, and Luna-Reyes (2011) have proved social media can

provide benefits, such as an open communication system, but that's what likely worries private and public organizations concerned about unknown legal ramifications. Teacher 1 from the Edmodo Case Study shared viewpoints that support this concern, saying "I think that Edmodo has more positive points in helping build relationships with the students and parents. The only thing that will hinder this relationship-building is access to technology and the knowledge and skill of using it." Government researchers have predicted the same and have said education is the key to success in public and private businesses (Picazo-Vela, Gutierrez-Martinez, & Luna-Reyes, 2011). There are social media advantages, but a good strategy may be needed to avoid risks (Picazo-Vela, Gutierrez-Martinez, & Luna-Reyes, 2011).

**Redefining the teacher's role in public relations.** Social Media networking websites such as Edmodo may help combat changes to the education system because the platform appears to build bridges with two-way interactive communications, according to the Edmodo Case Study. Grunig (2006) believed organizations should use social media as a bridge to empower publics within the organization and help cultivate relationships with two-way conversations. The Edmodo Case Study demonstrates teachers are doing just that, finding ways to meet the demands of today's high-tech students and cultivating relationships with students on Edmodo. The National Education Association has addressed the need for public relations and promoted "Three big ideas that underlie most of current scholarship and practice: learning as a process of active engagement; learning as individual and social; and learner differences as resources to be used, not obstacles to be confronted" (Wilson & Peterson, 2009, p.2). Edmodo appears to address all three issues, according to teachers who say they see Edmodo as a public relations tool. Edmodo as a public relations tool raises questions for future researchers, who may want to examine individual and social interaction on Edmodo to see if strategic teacher communications help

build relationships and reputation and explore if technology is changing the teachers role in public relations, as seen in this small case study.

Upon research and survey analysis from the Edmodo Case Study, data from the four teacher participants revealed that teachers see the power of teachers in public relations and collectively understand teacher influence over students and school reputation. All four teacher participants see Edmodo as a public relations tool that provides value with engagement, connection, and better access to students and parents. The teachers believe that using the social networking website Edmodo is affecting the role of a teacher in school public relations. “Based on my experience, using Edmodo to cultivate student relationships and strategically communicate with them and the parents has strengthened the relationship between the school and the parents through real-time, straightforward, transparent, and cost-effective communication medium,” reported teacher 1. The Edmodo study found teachers view students as stakeholders and support the notion that social media networking is potentially a public relations tool for teachers interested in reaching students.

Findings from this study entertain the possibility that the role of a teacher in public relations is changing because of Edmodo and suggest that educators should be thinking about what social media networking and strategic teacher communications might mean to schools, the teacher’s role in the school’s public relations, and the management of public relations even beyond the education sector. The Edmodo Study findings further support Calvin’s (2009) research that schoolteachers need more public relations training as communication management becomes more democratic versus traditional top-down management. These results are important to the practice of public relations because there’s a professional discourse in how social media effects public relations.



Public relations practitioners face critical challenges because of evolving social media, such as how to best reach stakeholders and manage public relations (Seitel, 2013). Further research could help determine whether teachers play a role in public relations and whether technology is changing their role. Grunig's Global Public Relations Theory (2006) redefines public relations as a "Strategic means of interacting with publics and bringing information from the environment into organizational decision-making" (p.1). This study shows social networking implications on the role of the teacher in public relations. In fact, the teachers in the Edmodo study believe their decision to strategically communicate with students somehow redefine their role in public relations. The way the teachers interact on Edmodo supports Grunig's (2006) belief public relations is moving away from message dumping into strategic communications management.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

The Edmodo Case Study explored how teachers communicate with students to see if their decision to use social networking technology affects their role in public relations. This case study looked at teachers who used Edmodo and found teachers use strategic communications at least some of the time to help build relationships with students on Edmodo and found the teachers' approach to strategic communications was similar to public relations. Using Hendrix's (1992) R.O.P.E. Theory, this study found teachers sometimes develop planned communication goals of task, relationship, and/or reputation management that feature informational or results-oriented objective messages designed to effectively communicate one-way informational or two-way interactive messages on Edmodo. The results showed teacher strategic communications on Edmodo are similar to public relations management and help build relationships between the

organization and its stakeholders, change behaviors to achieve desired results and help brand the school.

Findings are limited, but show social networking appears to be moving public relations into strategic communications and may further prove Grunig's (2006) Global Public Relations Theory that conceived social media caused a shift in power from the top down. The effects of social media on organizations and stakeholders were evident in this study, and further research is needed to better understand implications on the future practice of public relations. The Edmodo Case Study raises the need for additional research in public relations, education, government, business, and nonprofit organizations interested in understanding social media effects on public relations. The potential transformation of public relations into strategic communications management means organizations may be interested in learning strategic communications planning, writing and training methods to help a wide-range of employees that use social media to reach stakeholders from teachers to chief executive officers and front-desk secretaries.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Findings from this case study help describe ways technology may be redefining school public relations. However, more research is needed to determine whether educational social networking and strategic communications on Edmodo affect the teacher's role in school public relations. Several limitations exist in this study due to its small sample size. A larger population study is necessary to help determine whether Edmodo is changing traditional school public relations from the top down and empowering teachers with direct communications on similar social networking websites.

Since the case study of four teachers represents a small subset of teachers who use Edmodo, stratified sampling methods are recommended in the future to help reach a larger

population of teachers for meaningful analysis. Web browser privacy restrictions impacted some of the data collection submitted by teacher participant 1 on Edmodo because the information could not be fully accessed by the researcher without exposing minors. Finally, this study excluded students and student communications to help protect the privacy of minors. Doing so limited data on communications, views, and experiences to teachers only, with self-reported data that may be difficult to validate but can be easily replicated for reliability.

### **Edmodo Case Study Outside Evaluations**

#### **Reading Education Teacher and Edmodo User Heather Bergman**

Buck Lodge Middle School  
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Adelphi, MD 20783

May 20, 2014

Professor Brad King  
Ball State University  
Department of Journalism  
2000 W. University Ave.  
Muncie, Indiana 47306

Dear Professor King:

I read Ms. Ross's case study with great interest because I use Edmodo quite a lot in my classes. My credentials are as follows: I hold Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English Literature and expect to earn a Master's degree in Reading Education from the University of Maryland in 2017 with a reading specialist certification. I have taught for four years, the last two of which have been spent teaching a sheltered ESOL language arts class. This year I am also acting as chair of the ESOL department because the original chair went on maternity leave. Prior to becoming a teacher, I spent ten years working in academic and professional publishing as an editorial assistant and then as an editor.

I do not know Ms. Ross personally but responded to a request on Edmodo. I use Edmodo extensively in my classes to communicate, to assign work, administer assessments, and provide virtual discussion spaces for my students to interact with each other. I am not very familiar with

the public relations literature, but was interested in the idea that communicating on Edmodo is a form of public relations.

Any communication to students can be a form of public relations, because once the teacher's "message" is out, it has an effect on how students, parents, and others view the teacher and indeed the school as a whole. That message can be positive and reflect a vibrant school community, or it can be negative. While I have seen literature on the effect of using electronic learning management systems in the classroom on classroom performance, I had never thought of how communications through new media could play a public relations role. The topic is interesting and worth researching.

Ms. Ross's approach was, I felt, largely appropriate. Because the teachers were self-selected, though, that may have biased some of her findings. She may have attracted teachers who already saw their postings on Edmodo as having some sort of public relations functions prior to her study. However, I am not sure how she could have avoided that issue, given that participation in the study was voluntary. The use of surveys, interviews, and sampling of postings was appropriate. I would have liked to see a larger cohort of teachers, observed over a longer period of time (say, a whole semester).

The research portion of the project was very thorough. Ms. Ross did an excellent job providing the necessary background information for someone who is not familiar with the literature. I did notice a few places where she repeated herself, but that can be easily edited out. While I felt the research methods were appropriate, as stated above, I would have liked to see a larger cohort studied over a longer period of time. I also might have liked to see a few other questions answered such as: Is there a difference in the function of Edmodo across different subject matters? Different types of schools (public/private/charter)? Does usage differ depending

upon access to Edmodo outside of school? Does usage change over time? These questions might not have been relevant to this particular study, though they might be mentioned in the “future research” section. Ms. Ross is correct in identifying sample size as a limitation in this case study; perhaps future research could include a larger sample of teachers to see whether the initial research findings hold true.

I think that this is good first step in studying the function of electronic learning management systems in modern schooling, particularly as it involves public relations. Teachers do not receive training in PR, but so much of how schools are viewed comes from how teachers interact with students and parents. These interactions have increased and changed as communications methods have changed. Edmodo and tools like it provide an opportunity for teachers and schools to get the word out about all of the wonderful things that are happening in classrooms. This case study shows that school systems might want to consider providing some training in this area, or at least give it further study.

Sincerely,

Heather Bergman, MA  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade ESOL/Reading-English Language Arts  
Acting ESOL Chair

**School PR Consultant and Executive Director of the Indiana Chapter of the National  
School Public Relations Association, Donna Petraits**

Professor Brad King  
Ball State University  
Department of Journalism  
2000 W. University Ave.  
Muncie, Indiana 47306

Dear Professor King:

I have been asked by Deborah Ross to provide an evaluation of the following research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master's in Public Relations:

**EDMODO™ SOCIAL NETWORKING CASE STUDY:  
REDEFINING SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS IN A DIGITAL WORLD**

For ten years prior to my retirement in June 2013, I served as Communications Director for Brownsburg Community School Corporation. During that time I was instrumental in reviving the Indiana Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), served as its first president for two years and am presently its executive director. In addition, I consult with, advise, and train schools throughout Indiana on public relations and communications. I have a total of 30 years' experience in both secondary education and sales.

**Experience**

18 years teaching – secondary English, journalism, mass media, publications' adviser  
(newspaper and yearbook), Communications Dept. chair 12 years sales  
10 years communications director for Brownsburg Community School Corporation  
2 years president of the Indiana School Public Relations Association  
1 year executive director of the Indiana School Public Relations Association

Prior to her initial contact with me on May 15, I had no knowledge of or relationship with Deborah Ross. I believe it was through my position with the Indiana School Public Relations Association (INSPPRA) that Deborah reached out to me as an evaluator. The challenges and opportunities of social media, increasing demands for district accountability, greater competition for students, and the specter of referenda are just a few of the reasons school districts should take stock of how they are communicating with stakeholders. Districts that are not taking the lead in

telling their stories are not only leaving a critical information void, but short-changing their students' potential for success.

Sadly, as Deborah has noted in her research, school districts have largely ignored their staff as their primary public relations agents. Her research, although small, is an important step toward justifying, not merely the need to integrate social media into the classroom as a communications medium, but to train and encourage teachers in the strategic public relations functions they can serve with it.

The greatest weakness in the research is in the size of the sample. Although Edmodo™ claims to have over 30 million teachers and students using their product, the response rate was disappointing and perhaps predictable. According to a recent Harris Interactive Inc. survey only 18 percent of U.S. School Teachers use social media to connect with students and parents. There is, as Deborah has noted, a fear of the potential for inappropriate use compounded by the lack of local guidelines for appropriate use. A sampling that incorporated more than one social networking tool for educators similar to Edmodo™ (like My Big Campus™) may have resulted in a larger and more representative sample.

It's also interesting to note that of the four respondents, only one was a public school representative, while the other three were teachers at private schools. That is an interesting dynamic because private schools have long understood and utilized public relations and marketing tools for their very survival, while public schools are relatively new to that arena.



While I maintain that teachers' contributions to strategic communications are a largely untapped resource across the board, the deficit is far greater in public schools that have, until recently, not felt compelled to promote themselves. In addition, the difference in the level of public scrutiny/accountability for public vs. private schools likely greatly influences the opportunities/risks they take to utilize social media.

A 2011 NSPRA communications survey in partnership with K-12 Insight that assessed base line data in learning the communication preferences of parents and non-parents in NSPRA-member districts, supports the use of less traditional communication methods such as electronic and social media in school to parent communication. Although small, it is clear from her methodology that Deborah mined the available information for all it could offer. It does provide a foundation for others to expand research to "better understand social networking and teacher-student communications' effects on school public relations."

As a school public relations practitioner, I believe my colleagues would support the conclusions that this research projected:

1. Any method of communication that builds stakeholder relationships, interest and engagement has the potential to impact beyond the classroom (Ross)
2. Not only teachers, but school districts as a whole need "more training and tools to meet the developing demands of public relations." (Calvin)
3. "... it (educational social networking sites like Edmodo™) can definitely create a more approachable PR effort, but without a central driving vision to the message, it has the potential to become scattered and nebulous." (Teacher #4)
4. "Now that we are in the 21st century and the Age of Information, a school district needs a

communications professional to manage communication strategies that are proactive for a school district, instead of reactive.” (Chappelow)

Indeed, Grunig’s belief in the shift of power in public relations supports the conclusion of the researcher that there is “the need for future public relations training for teachers’ so teachers’ understand their role in public relations, school policy and school initiatives aimed at building relationships and reputation.”

Donna Petraits

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## Appendices

### Appendix A:

#### Edmodo Case Study: Survey 1

##### Q1: Why do you use Edmodo?

Teacher	Response
1	I use Edmodo because our school doesn't have a class website site. I intended to use it as a modified flipped classroom, student publishing, and electronic newsletter for my homeroom class.
2	I use Edmodo because our school doesn't have a class website site. I intended to use it as a modified flipped classroom, student publishing, and electronic newsletter for my homeroom class.
3	First, to assign/turn-in assignments digitally. Second, to teach my students online etiquette and security. Third, to network with other teachers to learn and share ideas and solve problems.
4	It is a reasonably reliable tool for me to communicate directly with my students, also giving them a way to submit assignments electronically.

**Q2: What do you think about the ability to strategically communicate with students using Edmodo?**

Teacher	Response
1	Aside from being cost-effective because it is free, Edmodo provides real-time communication with students and parents.
2	It is a great tool to have available since I am able to communicate with my students when they aren't in my classroom.
3	I believe it is a great source for communication due to it being secure, safe, and controlled by the teacher. It allows open communication, one-on-one communication, and group communication all monitored by the teacher.
4	It allows clarification of content, communication of additional material, and a significant increase in accountability for missed work after absences and assignments outside of a textbook.

**Q3: Please share a few examples of how Edmodo helps or hinders your ability to build relationships between the school organization and publics (students, parents and community).**

Teacher	Response
1	I think that Edmodo has more positive points in helping build relationships with the students and parents. The only thing that will hinder this relationship-building is access to technology and the knowledge and skill of using it.
2	Edmodo helps my ability to build relationships with my students since they know I am available thru Edmodo if they need help or have questions when they are not in my classroom. It helps build relationships with the parents as well since they have their own separate sign on and can follow along with what is happening in my classroom and track their students' progress. Lastly, it builds relationships with the community because I can connect with teachers from my school, teachers from my district, teachers in my field and much more.
3	I have not found a way to connect to parents or community. My parents, the several I have spoken with, do not wish to "check up on" their child and know the parent password. Regarding the students, I like the immediateness of comments and replies. I completely love the ability to see an email of all posts so I can quickly view all activity.
4	Since the platform of Edmodo is closed to the public (you have to be a member of a class to join and interact), I think it is the theoretical use of it that is a greater claim to integration of technology, and thus public relations.

**Q4: Some scholars argue technology is changing public relations. In fact, the Public Relations Society of America modernized their definition in 2012 to “Public Relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.” The National School Public Relations Association defines**

**public relations as:**

**"Educational public relations is a planned and systematic management function to help improve the programs and services of an educational organization. It relies on a comprehensive two-way communications process involving both internal and external publics, with a goal of stimulating a better understanding of the role, objectives, accomplishments and needs of the organization. Educational public relations programs assist in interpreting public attitudes, identify and help shape policies and procedures in the public interest, and carry on involvement and information activities which earn public understanding and support."**

**Knowing this, the question for you is—how do you define the role of a teacher in school public relations?**

Teacher	Response
1	The teacher I think is the face of the school more than the Principal. The teacher is the main messenger in the educational public relations setting.
2	The role of a teacher is to stimulate our students to understand the world around them.
3	The teacher is a direct conduit to the families of school information. They can utilize technology, newsletters, and word-of-mouth. They also are a potentially strong messenger in the community. But I feel that many do not embrace this opportunity.
4	Regardless of advertising campaigns or effective branding, a genuine educational experience shared by a room of students will be the best inspiration for word of mouth, much like a positive customer service experience serves as positive PR for a retail store.

**Q5: What other comments would you like to share regarding your decision to strategically communicate with students on Edmodo?**

Teacher	Response
1	I think that teachers should start looking into online tools such as Edmodo to strategically communicate with students and parents. I know that there will be some who will argue against using tools such as Edmodo because of its similarity to social networking. But our world is not moving backwards in terms of technology. It's either we embrace the positive effects of technology and use technology for successful relationship-building or be left in the dark
2	I love using Edmodo especially since it benefits the students who are reluctant to speak up or raise their hand in class Edmodo allows them to ask their question or concern without putting them in the "spotlight."
3	Edmodo allows me to the students the freedom to be themselves and share on a level that is more open with me as their teacher
4	I adore how much accountability it allows me to expect of my students, particularly as I prepare them for college.

**Appendix B:****Edmodo Case Study: Survey 2**

**Q1: In your opinion, how is Edmodo social networking affecting the way teachers send and receive information with students?**

Teacher	Response
1	Edmodo offers real-time communication between teachers and students. Besides, it is also free and secure.
2	I think it makes it easier, a lot of things are more accessible using Edmodo. However, if using Edmodo the teacher needs to set guidelines and monitor it very closely.
3	I feel it is streamlining this process. Yet it can also make it a bit casual and thus has the potential to cross some very uncross able lines.
4	It means that the school day no longer ends when the last bell rings. I can continue to communicate with them, they can ask questions in near real time, and I can provide supplemental materials to update course materials.

**Q2: Please describe what kind of messages (news and events, accomplishments, fundraising activities, reports, schedules) and tactics (private email, online notes, posts, blogs, video chats, instant messages) you prefer and also share an example of how you might use them to engage students with information?**

Teacher	Response
1	I usually use Edmodo for my electronic newsletter. I also use Edmodo for student publishing. I consider Edmodo as an adapted form of a flipped classroom
2	I post alerts on assignments, extra help times, my schedule the classroom schedule
3	I post all their assignments on Edmodo. I also have attached links to news articles and videos that pertain to our class. I have also sent out notices of final due dates as well as reminders of homework due.
4	Edmodo alerts, notes and assignments have become the most effective form of communication (as in likely to be read rather than blown off), covering everything from changes in uniform policy for cold weather to reminders of upcoming assignments.

**Q3: Please share a few examples of positive publicity you generated on Edmodo such as student and school accomplishments, activities, schedules and or events?**

Teacher	Response
1	I can share interactive sites for both students and parents, course syllabi, course outline that contains lesson plans, homework, quizzes, and classroom and school events.
2	I post alerts on assignments, when I am available for extra help after school, my schedule, the classroom schedule, and helpful videos. I have a homework folder where all my homework assignments are filed. I also allow for questions to be posted on class material if students are having difficulty with problems. I use Edmodo this way since it benefits my students. It is a common place for everyone to find any information they may need about my class and what is occurring in my class
3	I do not and do not know how.
4	I'm not sure how to promote my school, other than communications to other teachers, since anyone I am connected to is already part of our school.



**Q4: Is there anything else you'd like to share regarding personal experience on impact of communications using Edmodo?**

Teacher	Response
1	I believe that Edmodo is a positive site that promotes school public relations, whether we realize it or not. Since it is a new tool, it is understandable that there will be some who are cautious and skeptic about its use.
2	It affects students by keeping them involved with my classroom and the community,
3	I feel it allows the open communication between students and teacher thus building bridges of safety and confidence; allowing the students to be more open to share and ultimately learn!
4	I believe it has shifted the culture of what students perceive to be standard academic functioning, including online submission of work, student-student communication, and student-teacher interactions.

**Appendix C:****Edmodo Case Study: Survey 3**

**Q1: Can you think of any student interactions on Edmodo that have helped strengthen relationships or enhanced your school's reputation? If so, please share an example.**

Teacher	Response
1	If I will have to choose a student interaction on Edmodo that helped strengthen student and parent relationships with the school, it will have to be a student's access to the course syllabus, course outline, and course materials and references. For example, if a student of mine is absent due to illness or family emergency, that student of mine will not have to worry about missed lessons or homework because everything is uploaded to Edmodo. A student or parent can also send me instant notification of absences or just simple inquiries or clarifications. I think the nature of Edmodo being real-time is what enhances the interaction.
2	Parents are able to see when I am available for extra help after school. My students' parents have let me know that they are thankful I post this since they check the site and can urge their student to attend extra help.
3	I had a student posting some borderline inappropriate posts. I copied the posts and emailed the parents. I explained the purpose and strengths of Edmodo, and expressed the desire to help jointly to teach their son how to communicate online.
4	We have effectively used Edmodo to conduct student discussions of proposed pep rally activities in the Student Government group, also reminding students of assignment parameters and due dates.

**Q2: In addition to responding to online interactions, please share an example of how you recently communicated with emails, posts, tweets, video chats and blogs to help meet the school organization's short and long-term goals?**

Teacher	Response
1	The middle grade students are attending a Catholic conference tomorrow at the Capitol Hill in Nashville. I communicated to the students and parents the agenda of the conference. For the school's long-term goal, I communicate to the students and parents through the weekly lesson plans the school's emphasis on academic excellence.
2	Friday homework was assigned so I just posted a reminder to complete it and reminding students they can reply to my post if they have any questions.
3	I have only used it selfishly to promote my classroom goals. Yet if you count the school's goals to teach the students how to type, then all the assignments are posted and then turned in via Edmodo.
4	With a goal of "Continuing Excellence in the Catholic Tradition," we have frequently used Edmodo to conduct class discussions on content, find real-life applications for course material, and even conduct live chats during major live events (like the State of the Union Address).

**Q3: What outcomes have you seen on your ability to bond, engage and interact with students because of your experience on Edmodo?**

Teacher	Response
1	My students are more relaxed (yet still very respectful) in communicating with me. They like that I can be contacted real-time even after school hours. My students are more engaged in learning because they know the expectations ahead of time. They are more empowered with their learning.
2	I am available to my students at any time so this helps with them understanding that I am there for them and I want to help them learn at anytime. Also, since all my students have logins they can change their profile pictures which allows me to know their interests
3	I have found that a few students have shared some hobbies and I have commented. This resulted in a more friendly demeanor in the students in class.
4	Edmodo certainly helps to create a cohesive atmosphere within each group created, both courses and clubs.

**Q4: Do you believe Edmodo helps build relationships? If so, please share an example of ways you believe it helped manage your relationships or the school's reputation. If you don't believe Edmodo builds relationships, please explain your opinion.**

Teacher	Response
1	Yes, I strongly believe that Edmodo helps builds a closer relationship between the school and families that we serve. Most of the parents see the value of Edmodo because it is real-time, efficient, safe, and free. Just like what I have mentioned in the past, the parents appreciate that they have an access to course syllabi, course outlines, and course materials and references.
2	Edmodo builds relationships. Being a first year teacher in a big district Edmodo has allowed me to connect with teachers within my district (and outside of my district) share ideas with them, share opinions and communicate about anything else that may arise.
3	I am new to my school as of January. It is a small school where the students have been together for almost all their years of schooling. The class sizes are very small as well. Thus I was the outsider. Edmodo has allowed the students to feel like they are "techy" and look to me for this ability. Thus they have accepted me and made me feel as if I am "one of them."
4	I believe it has been successful in helping me to build relationships with other teachers, and while it has certainly fostered the continuation of relationships already begun.

**Appendix D:****Edmodo Case Study: Survey 4**

**Q1: Use of school logo in communications is a public relations tactic used by some schools.**

**Can you think of a time you've used a logo or something similar on Edmodo that might help "brand" your school?**

Teacher	Response
1	The last week of January is Catholic Schools Week (CSW). I used the 2014 CSW logo as Edmodo icon during CSW.
2	Using your schools mascot as a teacher picture profile can help brand the school. It makes it easy to see where the teacher works which can give you
3	I cannot, sorry.
4	Certain phenomena (titles of activities or events, profile pictures, or group mottos) could certainly contribute to the consistent perception of any school by the community at large. When I used to work at Muncie Central High School, they (the bearcats) created an acronym called The Bearcat Way, referencing respect, and other desired behavior. Developing internal vernacular like this could definitely come across as branding, and be effectively used across a variety of platforms, Edmodo included.

**Q2: In what ways have you seen promotions or school branding on Edmodo affect your ability to build alliances with students, parents and community?**

Teacher	Response
1	When I used the 2014 CSW logo as Edmodo icon, one of my students researched it and used it to design his brochure.
2	N/A
3	None.
4	None come to mind.

**Q3: In the past, school public relations was managed by administrators from the top-down. Today teachers use websites like Edmodo to directly communicate with the organization's public. In your opinion, are you helping or hurting school public relations with your strategic communications on Edmodo? Please explain.**

Teacher	Response
1	If used wisely, I think that Edmodo and similar sites are helping the school to promote itself to its stakeholders. Edmodo is safe (the students, teachers, parents are the only audiences), real-time, and cost-effective (free).
2	If Edmodo is used in a professional manner then we are helping. Students are connected to their teachers outside of the classroom building relationships and understanding.
3	This is truly a subjective area. It depends upon how and what the teachers communicate. It can be positive and promote learning. It can also be inappropriate and tear down learning.
4	I think it can definitely create a more approachable PR effort, but without a central driving vision to the message, it has the potential to become scattered and nebulous.



**Q4: Do school administrators proactively discuss school public relations and teacher expectations with you? If so, please share a brief summary of what's expected of teachers when it comes to online communications and school public relations?**

Teacher	Response
1	We are expected to ask parents' permission for anything that is related to technology-use. Plus, ethical communication is expected from all groups - teachers, students, and parents.
2	Yes, teacher are required to be professional.
3	Not really at this school. My previous school was great in this area.
4	Rarely do they discuss with us.

**Q5: Does it seem like a teacher's decision to use Edmodo changes his or her role in school public relations? Please explain your answer.**

Teacher	Response
1	Yes, the teacher becomes the direct PR officer because the teacher is the sole user of the medium in order to interact with the students and parents
2	Yes in a good way, it allows the teacher to strengthen relationships within the community and district.
3	I feel it empowers them to bring their class into the tech age and teach them digital responsibility. Yes in a way it can promote the teacher in public relations.
4	It is entirely up to the teachers -- we have the option, but there is no mandatory implementation. A happy medium could be establishing a culture of endorsement and usage within faculty communications, but that hasn't developed at our institution yet.

**Appendix E:****Edmodo Case Study: Survey 5**

Questionnaire with rating response from strongly agree to somewhat agree, agree, undecided, somewhat disagree, disagree and strongly disagree.

**Q1: I use Edmodo to strategically communicate with students.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Strongly agree
3	Strongly agree
4	Strongly agree

**Q2: I sometimes fact-find or analyze a problem, situation or opportunity then develop a plan of approach and deliver the message to students on Edmodo.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Undecided
3	Somewhat agree
4	Strongly agree

**Q3: In the past 6 months, my students have received proactive and or reactive messages to a problem or opportunity from me on Edmodo.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Strongly agree
3	Strongly agree
4	Strongly agree

**Q4: I target specific groups on Edmodo such as students with action planned communications.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Strongly agree
3	Strongly agree
4	Strongly agree

**Q5: I normally plan and execute a theme, message, action or special event message to students on Edmodo.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Strongly agree
3	Strongly agree
4	Somewhat agree

**Q6: I set goals and objectives for at least some of the messages I send to students.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Strongly agree
3	Strongly agree
4	Strongly agree

**Q7: I've seen a change in behavior building relationships with students, parents and or community on Edmodo.**

Teacher	
1	Strongly agree
2	Strongly agree
3	Somewhat agree
4	Somewhat agree

**Q8: I help brand my school through Edmodo communications and believe my decision to use Edmodo helps improve my school's public relations with students, parents and community.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Undecided
3	Agree
4	Agree

**Q9: I monitor and analyze my communication outcomes as a result of Edmodo then assess feedback and next steps.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Strongly agree
3	Strongly agree
4	Agree

**Q10: Teacher student communications on Edmodo change the role of a teacher in school public relations.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Agree
3	Strongly agree
4	Agree

**Appendix F:****Edmodo Case Study: Survey 6**

Mixed-questionnaire with structured and semi-structured questions as well as rating questions: rating response from strongly agree to somewhat agree, agree, undecided, somewhat disagree, disagree and strongly disagree.

**Q1: I see my communications to students and parents on Edmodo becoming more and more strategic (planned with a goal or objective in mind).**

Teacher	Response
1	Yes
2	Yes
3	Yes
4	Yes

**Q2: Do you think a teacher's decision to use Edmodo social networking to strategically communicate changes the teacher's role in school public relations?**

Teacher	Response
1	Yes
2	Yes
3	Yes
4	Yes

**Q3: How do you define school public relations?**

Teacher	Response
1	School public relations is the establishment of a positive relationship between the school and the parents who are the primary stakeholders.
2	School public relations is how the school and its employees convey/uphold their message to parents and students.
3	Multi-levels of communications with the public
4	Representation to the public, taking a variety of forms.

**Q4: Based on your experience, how does a teacher's decision to cultivate student relationships and strategically communicate on Edmodo impact school public relations at your school?**

Teacher	Response
1	Based on my experience, using Edmodo to cultivate student relationships and strategically communicate with them and the parents has strengthened the relationship between the school and the parents through real-time, straightforward, transparent, and cost-effective communication medium.
2	Yes, my students have let me know they find it useful and helpful to be able to connect with me outside of school hours.
3	Edmodo communications helps build "trust" that transforms into building relationships
4	It is a clear manifestation of our purported efforts to facilitate student initiation and ownership over their own educational experience.

**Q5: Public perception of teachers can affect school morale, support and image.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Somewhat agree
3	Strongly agree
4	Strongly agree

**Q6: Have you ever received any college preparation or school system training on school public relations?**

Teacher	Response
1	Yes
2	No
3	Yes
4	No

**Q7: Are you interested in receiving school public relations training for teachers?**

Teacher	Response
1	Yes
2	Yes
3	Yes
4	Undecided



**Q8: Do you think your decision to use Edmodo has affected your school's morale, support and or public image in a positive way?**

Teacher	Response
1	Yes
2	Yes
3	Yes
4	Yes

**Q9: Are schools in your area competing for new student enrollment because of programs like school choice?**

Teacher	Response
1	Yes
2	No
3	No
4	Yes

**Q10: A teachers' public relations role is critical to a schools success.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Strongly agree
3	Strongly agree
4	Somewhat agree

**Q11: My school and or school system recognizes teachers play an important role in school public relations.**

Teacher	Response
1	No
2	Yes
3	No
4	No

**Q12: There's a need to include teachers in policy and training aimed at school public relations goals and objectives.**

Teacher	Response
1	Agree
2	Agree
3	Agree
4	Agree

**Q13: In addition to building relationships and strategically communicate with students on Edmodo, I also view Edmodo as a tool for school public relations.**

Teacher	Response
1	Strongly agree
2	Strongly agree
3	Strongly agree
4	Somewhat agree

**Q14: How long have you been using Edmodo?**

Teacher	Response
1	7 months to 1 year
2	7 months to 1 year
3	7 months to 1 year
4	2-3 years

**Q15: Do you use Edmodo because you want to use the service or has your school or school system asked you to use Edmodo?**

Teacher	Response
1	I use Edmodo because I want to
2	I use Edmodo because I want to
3	I use Edmodo because I want to
4	I use Edmodo because I want to

**Q16: What is your gender?**

Teacher	Response
1	Female
2	Female
3	Female
4	Female

**Q17: What is your age?**

Teacher	Response
1	35-44 years old
2	25-34 years old
3	45-54 years old
4	25-34 years old

**Q18: What is the highest degree you have received?**

Teacher	Response
1	Master's degree (scheduled to graduate shortly after study)
2	Bachelor's degree
3	Master's degree
4	Master's degree (scheduled to graduate shortly after study)

**Q19: Which U.S. region is your school system located?**

Teacher	Response
1	Southeast
2	Northeast
3	Midwest
4	Southeast

**Q20: What K-12 grade or grades do you teach?**

Teacher	Response
1	Grade K, Grade 5, Grade 6, Grade 7 & Grade 8
2	Grade 9
3	Grade 6, 7, 8 & 10
4	Grade 9, 10, 11 & 12

**Appendix G:****Edmodo Case Study: Survey 7****Phone interview****Q1: What % of teachers at your school do you estimate use Edmodo?**

Teacher	Response
1	N/A (Teacher 1 did not participate in phone interview)
2	25-30%
3	20%
4	20%

**Q2: More females than males participated in the case group and anonymous online surveys. Do you think more females at your school use Edmodo. If so, why?**

Teacher	Response
1	N/A
2	Yes, more female teachers at my school
3	Not sure but I see more female teachers posting communications on Edmodo than men.
4	No, probably equal amount of female and males

**Q3: How many strategic communications on average do you send per day on Edmodo?**

Teacher	Response
1	N/A
2	1-2
3	1-2

4	6-10
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**Q4: Public relations have 3 basic goals in mind when sending strategic communications; task management, relationship management and reputation management. Most of your teacher communication goals fall into which category? Please check all that apply.**

Teacher	Response
1	N/A
2	Task the majority of time, relationship sometimes
3	75% of the time task, building relationships about 25% of the time
4	90% task and 10% relationship

**Q5: Do you view Edmodo as a PR tool? Why or why not?**

Teacher	Response
1	N/A
2	Yes but I hadn't thought about it being a PR tool until this study.
3	Yes. Edmodo allows public relations in the classroom because kids can connect and communicate with the teacher
4	Yes. Views students' as a stakeholder and uses Edmodo to reach them inside and outside of the classroom

**Q6: During the surveys, teachers reported using several types of communications or PR outputs on Edmodo's social networking website. What have you used to reach your public on Edmodo? Please check all that apply. (course syllabus, newsletter, homework/assignments, homework/assignment due dates or alerts, classroom events or school schedule, teacher schedule including after hours, emails, private messages, group communication posts, individual post, live chats, student recognition and awards, surveys**

**or polls, podcast, twitter, blocs, relevant or helpful videos, post news articles, flipped classroom).**

Teacher	Response
1	N/A
2	Homework assignments, homework due dates/alerts, classroom events or class schedule, teacher schedule, private messages, group communication posts, student recognition and or awards, surveys or polls, relevant or helpful videos.
3	Homework assignments, homework due dates/alerts, classroom events or schedule, private messages, group communication post, individual post, live chats, student recognition and or awards, relevant or helpful videos.
4	Course syllabus, homework assignments, homework due dates/alerts, classroom events or schedule, school events or school schedule, teacher schedule, private messages, group communication post, individual communication post, live chats, student recognition and or rewards, surveys or polls, podcast, relevant or helpful videos, post news articles, flipped classroom



**Q7: The practice of public relations follows Grunig's 4 Model Theory of PR. Which of the following describes most of your strategic communications (persuasion & manipulation propaganda, techniques to deliver information, modern marketing or communications that negotiate with publics, resolve conflict and promote mutual respect).**

Teacher	Response
1	N/A
2	Believes she uses only two of the four models, public information model and Two-Way Symmetrical
3	Provided examples of the Four-Model Theory and Teacher 3 says she uses all four in her communications with press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical.
4	Teacher says she uses 3 of the 4 models. She doesn't believe she uses press agency when I defined it for her.

**Q8: In PR, messages are sent with an objective in mind. The majority of teachers agree that their communications are strategic with a goal in mind. Please select one or more of the following goals behind most of your communications. (results, informational, attitudinal, and or behavior).**

Teacher	Response
1	N/A
2	Mostly informational objectives but has results objectives and behavior objectives
3	Results objectives, informational objectives, and attitudinal objectives
4	1 is informational objective and 2 is results

**Q9: How do you measure results from your teacher communications on Edmodo? Do you keep a tracker on basic communication information such as sender, receiver, message and response/feedback.**

Teacher	Response
1	N/A
2	Yes, I keep an excel tracker with all communications and I review it to see how students are doing.
3	I save communication posts to keep track of interactions and actions/results
4	Yes, but informal.

**Q10: Please describe how strategic communications on Edmodo has affected your students, class or school public relations.**

Teacher	Response
1	N/A
2	Edmodo provides “access” to the teacher, knowing that she/he is available (to stakeholders) helps public relations.
3	Edmodo helps me build relationships.
4	Edmodo helps the public see the school more favorably with interactive communication.